AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for permanently deforming a flexible film material ~~(1)~~, in which the film material ~~(1)~~ is deformed, comprising the step of: forming a receptacle depression ~~(20, 21, 22, 23)~~, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the film material ~~(1)~~ is kept under controlled tension while it is being moulded, so that controlled creases are formed in the film material ~~(1)~~.

2. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the tension is relaxed in a controlled manner during the deforming procedure.

3. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~either of~~ Claims 1 ~~or 2~~, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the tension is controlled by applying a controlled retaining force to peripheral regions ~~(1a, 1b)~~ of the film material ~~(1)~~.

4. (Currently amended) The method as claimed ~~in any of~~ Claims 1 ~~to 3~~, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the tension is controlled by moving peripheral regions ~~(1a, 1b)~~ of the film material ~~(1)~~ towards one another in a controlled manner.

5. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 4, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the peripheral regions ~~(1a, 1b)~~ are moved a specific distance towards one another.

6. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 4 ~~or 5~~, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the peripheral regions ~~(1a, 1b)~~ are moved parallel to one another or towards one another in radial directions.

7. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding c~~Claims 1, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the tension is

controlled in such a manner that, in the region of the receptacle depression ~~(20, 21, 22, 23)~~, a substantially crease-free region ~~(20a, 20b, 20c, 20d)~~ and a region ~~(20b, 21b, 22b, 23b)~~ provided with controlled creases are formed.

8. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding c~~Claims 1, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the film material ~~(1)~~ is brought to a controlled temperature before or during the deforming process, which makes permanent deformation of the film material possible ~~(1)~~.

9. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 8, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the temperature is raised or lowered during the deforming process.

10. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding c~~Claims 1, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the film material ~~(1)~~ is partially or completely printed before the deforming process.

11. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 10, ~~characterised in that~~wherien the film material ~~(1)~~ is printed with distortion-sensitive contents, such as writing, logos or trade marks in a region which is only slightly distorted during the deforming process.

12. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~either of~~ Claims 10 ~~or 11~~, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the film material ~~(1)~~ is printed with an undistorted printed image.

13. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding c~~Claims 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the film material ~~(1)~~ is deformed with a positive ~~(14)~~ and/or a negative mould ~~(16)~~.

14. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 13, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the positive ~~(14)~~ and/or the negative mould ~~(16)~~ is unheated.

15. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 13, ~~characterised in that~~wherein the positive ~~(14)~~ and/or the negative mould ~~(16)~~ are heated and brought to a predetermined temperature.

16. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of~~ Claims 13 ~~to 15~~, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the positive ~~(14)~~ and/or the negative mould ~~(16)~~ are subjected to a partial vacuum ~~(18)~~.

17. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding c~~Claims 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the film material ~~(1)~~ is heated and deformed during a deformation time between a positive ~~(14)~~ and a negative mould ~~(16)~~, the tension in the film material ~~(1)~~ being relieved in a controlled manner during the deformation time and/or after a recovery time after the end of the deformation time.

18. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 17, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the recovery time can be up to several seconds long.

19. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~any of the preceding c~~Claims 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the flexible film material ~~(1)~~ is delivered to a deforming station in cycles, such that a number of receptacle depressions are formed simultaneously with each stroke of the cycle, with margins of the web being kept under controlled tension

20. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 19, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the film material is delivered in

the form of a continuous web or in the form of individual blanks.

21. (Currently amended) A method of manufacturing a product packed in flexible film material ~~(1)~~, especially a food product, ~~using the method as claimed in any of the preceding claims~~comprising the steps of:

forming a receptacle depression, wherein the film material is kept under controlled tension while it is being moulded, so that controlled creases are formed in the film material; ~~, characterised in that~~ and

placing a product to be packed~~, especially a food product, is placed~~ in the receptacle depression.

22. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 21, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the food product is introduced into the receptacle depression in a free-flowing state.

23. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~either of~~ Claims 21 ~~or 22~~, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the receptacle depression is sealed, especially with a sealing film.

24. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 23, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein a peripheral sealing rim or seam is formed, especially by bonding or ultrasonic welding.

25. (Currently amended) A device for permanently deforming a flexible film material, ~~(1), especially for carrying out the method as claimed in any of Claims 1 to 19,~~ the device comprising:

~~with~~ a positive ~~(14)~~ and/or a negative mould ~~(16)~~ and a means ~~(4)~~ for holding peripheral regions ~~(1a, 1b)~~ of the film material ~~(1)~~, wherein the film material is kept under controlled tension while it is being moulded, so that controlled creases are

formed in the film material and a receptacle depression is formed.

26. (Currently amended) The device as claimed in Claim 25, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the positive ~~(14)~~ and/or the negative mould ~~(16)~~ can be connected to a vacuum source.

27. (Currently amended) The device as claimed in ~~either of~~ Claims 25 ~~or 26~~, ~~characterised by~~ further comprising a heating means ~~(12)~~ for heating the film material ~~(1)~~ to a controlled temperature.

28. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the product to be packed is a food product .